

## Improving our Campus Climate

Mar. 28, 2016

Dear University Family,

As educators and students in an increasingly diverse world, our first responsibility is to create a sense of belonging on a campus with people from all walks of life and from all manner of background, including, but not limited to, color, creed, gender, place, identity, ability, income, and perspective.

It is not only a worthy aspiration for an institution of higher learning, it is a moral imperative and responsibility to those who live and work on our campus and the community we serve and help shape.

That is why our strategic plan calls upon us to “enhance the diversity and inclusivity of our university community through recruitment, promotion, and retention of an increasingly diverse population of faculty, administrators, staff, and students, and by implementing initiatives that provide rich diversity-related experiences for all, to help ensure their success in an interconnected world.”

This important goal will take a collaborative effort and enduring commitment. The community we want is not created in a single moment in time, nor is it captured at the end of a calculation or spreadsheet. It is about creating a culture in which students, faculty, and staff all feel safe and welcome on our campus.

To that end, the University is working toward an ambitious set of priorities, and we are making early progress on the important work of building a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming community.

As part of our collective commitment, our Board of Trustees and senior administrative and academic officials recently took the lead in participating in a campus training on minimizing bias and creating a culture of inclusion. As an extension of that work, we are providing a training program for faculty who serve on search committees to support more robust and diverse candidate pools for the selection of faculty positions.

These are important steps. But there is still more to do to engage the entire campus community.

On March 29th we will launch a survey for the entire university that is designed to gather feedback for better understanding the campus climate. The input from this survey will be supplemented with interviews and focus groups being conducted with students, faculty, and staff so that we can develop a complete picture of our campus and provide a baseline for measuring future progress.

Our goal is to listen to the UK community, so that we may best identify the needs and hopes toward creating an inclusive and welcoming campus. Please take the necessary time to thoughtfully participate in the survey.

Our only way to move forward is to walk together, to listen to one another, and to learn from each other, so that we may collectively foster a better University of Kentucky for everyone who is part of our special community.

This is another important step – one of many – we will take, together. I look forward to our shared journey.

Thank you,

Eli Capilouto  
President